

Mr. Chairman, I rise today as a 14-year member of the House Armed Services Committee and the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities to address probably what I believe is one of the most important assets that we have for the Department of Defense, the role of our small businesses in America.

My subcommittee, along with the full committee, has worked hard to develop ways to expand opportunities for small businesses to get defense procurements. For example, we wanted to repeal the Small Business Competitive Demonstration Program. This would reinstitute the use of small business set-asides for Federal procurements in certain industry groups, assuring that these small businesses are awarded a fair proportion of Department of Defense contracts.

The repeal of this program would not only have saved DOD money and personnel but would have improved small business prime and subcontracting opportunities.

Secondly, the Armed Services Committee was hoping to extend the Small Business Innovation Research program by 1 year and to apply funding toward technical assistance for that program in order to strengthen the ability of small businesses to meet the demands of DOD requirements.

It would have made perfect sense to move an extension within this bill because over 50 percent of that program is with the Department of Defense.

Also, there is a program called the Mentor-Protege Program. It pairs up major DOD contractors with small businesses, and it helps to develop a relationship with these small contractors to help them.

As you can see, these are good provisions for small businesses. Unfortunately, none of these amendments were approved by the Rules Committee because of the objections raised by the House Small Business Committee on grounds of jurisdiction. I think everyone in this Chamber will agree that small businesses are the backbone of many of our districts and I know that this is true in the 47th Congressional District of California.

I hope that in the very near future, the Committee on Small Business will work with the Armed Services Committee to rapidly provide these resources to our small businesses.

I rise today as a 14-year Member of the House Armed Services Committee and the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Unconventional Threats to address probably what I consider one of the most important assets to the Department of Defense--the role of small businesses.

My subcommittee along with the full committee has worked hard to develop ways to expand opportunities for small businesses in defense procurement.

Let me provide this chamber with a couple of amendments that would have ultimately not only strengthened this bill and the Department but would have also provided our country's small businesses with the resources in order to thrive in the competitive world of DoD contracting.

For example, we wanted to repeal the Small Business Competitive Demonstration Program. This would re-institute the use of small business set-asides for Federal procurements in certain industry groups, assuring that these small businesses are awarded a fair proportion of DoD contracts.

The repeal of this program would not only have saved DoD money--but also personnel--while improving small business prime and subcontracting opportunities.

Second, the Armed Services Committee was hoping to extend the Small Business Innovation Research program by 1 year and apply funding toward technical assistance for the program in order to strengthen the ability of small businesses to meet the demands of DoD requirements.

Currently, 11 Federal agencies are involved in the SBIR Program where DoD takes up 50 percent of the entire SBIR Program.

It would have made perfect sense to move such an extension within the NDAA, because DoD has over 50 percent of the program.

Through this year's bill the Committee was also working towards extending the DoD Mentor-Protégé program by 5 years.

The Mentor-Protégé program is a program that started with DoD in 1991.

This program pairs up major DoD contractors with small businesses and helps develop a relationship where major contractors can provide developmental assistance to small businesses and guide them to a point where they can sustain themselves.

As you can see, all these provisions would have significantly expanded and strengthened small business growth.

One of my subcommittee's major responsibilities is to provide and expand resources for small businesses who want to do business with DoD.

Unfortunately, none of these amendments were approved by the Rules Committee because of objections raised by the House Small Business Committee on grounds of jurisdiction.

The FY2011 National Defense Authorization Act is a good piece of legislation that addresses several of the Defense Department's most important challenges, including:

The fight to interrupt the flow of violent extremists and the ideological underpinnings of radicalization;

The development and deployment of innovative and critical technologies;

Defending our homeland from attacks and managing the consequences of catastrophic incidents including natural disasters;

Enhancing strategies and capabilities to counter irregular warfare challenges;

And enhancing force protection policies governing Department of Defense personnel.

And I believe none of these challenges can be met without the innovation and technology of our small businesses.

I think everyone in this chamber will agree that small businesses are the backbone of many of our districts; I know it is for the 47th District of California.

I hope in the very near future the Committee on Small Businesses will work with the Armed Services Committee to rapidly provide these resources to our small businesses.

{wmv}DefenseSmallBiz{/wmv}